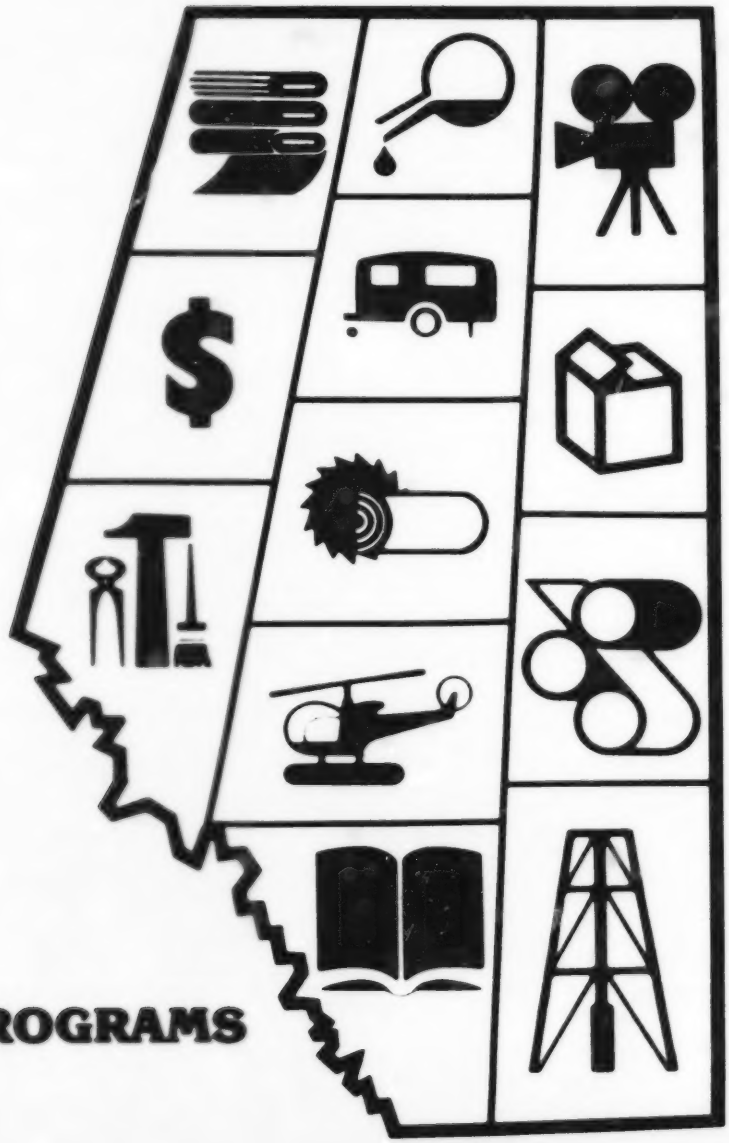
Assisting Regional Communities Industry and Business



CURRENT PROGRAMS

Alberta

TOURISM AND SMALL BUSINESS
Regional Business Development Branch
831001

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Objectives

The Regional Business Development Branch provides professional economic planning and development consultation to municipalities and businesses. Our overall objective is to assist interested groups within a community in preparing and implementing programs that are compatible with their social and economic resources.

Our specific objectives are:

- To assist residents of a community in improving their quality of life by encouraging economic planning and development that contributes to future growth.
- To initiate a co-operative approach to economic development within a region by encouraging municipalities and businesses to work together to achieve common goals.
- To assist communities in attracting industry or expanding present facilities as well as provide site location analysis to new business prospects.
- To work toward solutions for improving the economic balance between rural and urban growth.
- To provide information and counselling on government programs designed to assist business, industry and community development.
- To encourage open communication between communities, business, industry and government as a means to identify opportunities for economic growth throughout Alberta.

Alberta Locations Program

This program is designed to help new and expanding businesses choose suitable site locations within Alberta. The program provides the following pertinent information and professional consultation:

Part 1 – **Community Profiles**
This series of publications contains demographic, economic and statistical data on cities, towns and villages in Alberta. Available in limited quantities to interested parties and distributed to communities throughout Alberta. Reference sets can be found in Regional Offices and major libraries.

Part 2 – **Investment Data Sheets**
A series of basic facts and comparisons concerning the current business climate in Alberta.

Part 3 – **Industrial Land Inventory**
A compilation of basic facts on available industrial land in Alberta.

Part 4 – **Locations Assistance**
A personal and confidential consultation service providing reliable information on the business and investment climate of Alberta.

Part 5 – **Financial Assistance to Municipalities**
Funding is available to communities to offset costs of bringing prospective investors to view business sites and assess the location advantages.

Part 6 – **Trade Show Participation**
Representatives of the Regional Business Development Branch attend as well as participate in a number of selected local, national and international trade shows to promote the advantages of locating a business or industry in Alberta and prospect for new investors.

Alberta Industrial Land Program

The Alberta Industrial Land Program is designed to help cities, towns and villages assemble and/or develop industrial land to meet identified needs. This program is not designed to exclude private sector involvement or to supply the total future needs of a community.

Only land that is annexed or suitable for annexation by the municipality is eligible for assistance under this program. Financing is usually pro-rated over 15 years for assembly and 5 years for the development phase. These terms include legal and interest fees.

The Alberta Industrial Land Program is a joint undertaking of the Alberta Housing Corporation and Alberta Tourism and Small Business. The former administers the program and purchases the land to be assembled and developed. The latter helps communities evaluate their industrial land requirements and apply for the program by providing consultation on the preparation of the community overview, specific market identification as well as site management, marketing and planning.

Regional Business Development representatives assist municipalities by providing consultation and participation through all phases of the program including the initiation of land assembly and the development application process.

Opportunity Advertising Program

The Regional Business Development Branch runs a series of ads in the Business Opportunities section of newspapers across Alberta. These ads, headlined "Opportunities for Small Business in Alberta", are designed to give municipal councils and chambers of commerce an opportunity to advertise the kinds of businesses they are interested in attracting.

The success of the business opportunities listed in the advertising program are the responsibility of the individuals expressing interest in establishing them. We provide background information and counselling to help the small business person get off to a good start.

Copies of all advertisements are kept on file in the regional business development offices throughout Alberta and are available upon request.

Community Business Development Training Program

We have developed a training program to help communities understand economic development in relationship to their region. It is available to associations, committees or interested groups at no cost.

Training sessions can be arranged by contacting the local Business Development representative who works with the communities in delivering the program.

This program covers such topics as:

- Community economic development
- Forming an economic development committee
- Prospecting for industrial development
- Marketing a community's industrial land
- Developing a community information package

Free publications and training guides on the above materials are available from the Business Development representatives listed in the back of this booklet.

Regional Business Development Scholarship Program

The Economic Developers Association of Alberta and the province provide scholarships to individuals interested in furthering their education in the field of economic development. The Scholarship Program has three key objectives:

1. To provide financial help to people in economic development fields who wish to improve their qualifications through further education.
2. To nurture and develop provincial expertise in the field of economic development.
3. To assist regional businesses, industry and communities by developing local expertise in the field of economic development.

The awarding of scholarships and administration of funds are the responsibility of the Economic Developers Association of Alberta. The scholarships enable recipients to improve their qualifications by attending economic development courses and programs. This further education and expertise will in turn benefit the communities where candidates work as well as the province of Alberta.

These scholarships are awarded annually and preference will be given to:

A. Individuals engaged full time in economic development.

B. Individuals and or communities which stand to gain the most benefit from the scholarships.

C. Obvious areas of financial need.

Community Economic Development Program

Our Business Development representatives work and live in the areas they serve. Their responsibility is to help the communities within their regional boundaries establish a solid economic base. Working in co-operation with municipal officials, business organizations and various government departments and agencies, our representatives develop programs for the expansion of existing businesses and attraction of new enterprises to the area.

A major role the Business Development representative plays in helping communities develop their economic potential is the establishing of economic development committees. These committees consist of municipal officials, business people and interested community representatives and are set up to study the area, develop viable programs and put plans into action so that goals and objectives can be achieved within reasonable time frames.

Chamber of Commerce Program

By virtue of the fact that we share a common goal, namely to create a more secure, more profitable economic environment for Alberta's rural business communities, the Regional Business Development Branch and local chambers of commerce work closely together. The chambers are kept fully informed of all new and existing programs available through various government departments and agencies that could benefit their area.

Business Opportunity Workshops, a program established by the Branch in co-operation with the chambers, are held throughout Alberta for companies involved in resource development and for those planning to expand or build new manufacturing operations. These workshops help improve communication within the business community and point out the benefit of new development to the area.

Many of the programs have been designed to help further economic development in rural Alberta and depend on the local Chambers of Commerce to assist in delivering the information to the decision-makers in the business community.

Rural Business Projects Program

Recognizing there is strength in numbers, communities with small populations can band together to sustain a basic level of business services in their areas as well as attract new businesses by combining the resources of the total region. These regional community groups form the basis for a Rural Business Projects Program.

Resources for these programs are provided in part through provincial government grants which help offset the cost of employing a full-time administrative co-ordinator.

The establishment of a Rural Business Projects Program in a region requires a minimum of two towns or villages with a combined population of 1,300 people. Critical to the success of a program is a strong spirit of joint co-operation and a compatible business base in order to set mutual goals for economic growth.

Management Assistance Program

A little management advice from experts can mean a lot to a small business. The Management Assistance Program (MAP) retains the services of private management consultants to help Alberta's small business community operate more effectively.

The consultants meet with small business people to discuss all facets of their business operations. Costs for this service are paid by the provincial government with the exception of a nominal registration fee which is paid to the local chamber of commerce or a trade association.

Delivery of the program is the responsibility of the Small Business Assistance Branch, working in co-operation with the Regional Business Development representatives who administer the program at the local level.

MAP has two primary objectives:

1. To improve the organization, service and profit structure of small business through education and a self-help approach.
2. To encourage the province's management consulting firms to participate in small business counselling and program development.

To accomplish these objectives the MAP programs are spread over a 5½ month period providing each participating business with 3 or 4 half-days of consulting time.

The four phases of the program include individual firm research, individual firm counselling, counselling follow-up and program audit.

Over 2,000 businesses have been involved in the program to date, resulting in improved efficiency, savings, service and profitability.

Research and Analysis Program

An integral part of the Small Business Division is a group of professionals who are responsible for research and analysis. This group provides our Business Development representatives with up-to-date information and statistics on business and financial trends.

Specific business development studies are undertaken by the branch or the services of a private consulting firm may be employed, depending on the need and funds available. The results of the studies help our representatives support communities and businesses in their decision-making process by providing current, factual data relevant to their needs.

Information on Government Programs

One of the ways the Regional Business Development Branch encourages Albertans to participate in the economic development of their province is by maintaining an awareness of the various government programs available to help small business people. This is achieved by acting as a liaison for residents of rural Alberta and government representatives responsible for delivering the programs to the communities.

We provide information on our programs as well as those available through other provincial departments, the federal government, various agencies and business associations. Our communication network also helps keep our associates in Alberta Tourism and Small Business and related departments informed about economic development in rural communities.

Numerous government departments and related agencies provide a wide range of programs and services to promote the expansion of business in Alberta.

The Regional Business Development representative is familiar with these programs and can provide information on the following:

- Federal and provincial government assistance to business.
- Assistance available to solve particular business problems.
- Government personnel responsible for specific programs.

Regional offices distribute several free publications outlining the many government services available to business. For example, the Small Business Division of Alberta Tourism and Small Business has available a book entitled "Alberta Government Business Services Directory", and the federal government offers a directory entitled "Assistance to Business in Canada".

Business Counselling

Historically, small business has been the backbone of the rural economy. The importance of the retail merchant, service business and specialty shop is just as evident today in Alberta's smaller communities.

The primary aim of our counselling progam is to help these businesses develop and grow, thus contributing to the economic well-being of their community and the province.

Business analysts from our Small Business Assistance Branch and Business Development representatives from our Regional Development Branch provide professional counselling services to new and expanding businesses, to those experiencing difficulty or to businesses wanting to improve their present operation. Our Small Business Assistance Branch also offers expert counselling on merchandising and manufacturing.

Business Workshops

Our Business Counselling and Management Assistance Programs are in demand by large groups as well as individuals. To accommodate the broader audiences, we have developed special business workshops. These seminars may be conducted by our staff or by a private consulting firm. They can be held during the day or evening and be designed to dwell on one subject in depth or cover several related topics.

For example, a group of retail merchants may be concerned about shop-lifting in their community. We can offer the expertise needed to help deter such a problem.

Small Business Guides

A "how-to" series of booklets has been produced by the Small Business Division. These publications cover everything from starting a business to choosing a computer. They are comprehensive, factual, easy to read and available free from the regional offices listed in the back of this booklet.

The series includes:

Starting a Business in Alberta
Financing a Business in Alberta
Marketing for a Small Business in Alberta
Operating a Small Retail Business in Alberta
Operating a Small Manufacturing Business in Alberta
Operating a Small Service Business in Alberta
Selecting a Data Processing System in Alberta
Bookkeeping for a Small Business in Alberta
Operating a Small Construction Business in Alberta
Small Business Tips

Alberta Tourism and Small Business

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ST. PAUL REGION

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Calgary, Alberta T2R 1J5

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Calgary, Alberta T2R 1J5

LETHBRIDGE REGION

R. Wegner, Business Development Representative 329-5414
249 Provincial Building
200 - 5th Avenue South
Box 3014
Lethbridge, Alberta T1J 4C7

MEDICINE HAT REGION

R.V. Hullock, Business Development Representative 529-3630
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Medicine Hat, Alberta T1A 4J6

RED DEER REGION

E.E. Dicknoether, Business Development Representative 343-5300
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Red Deer, Alberta T4N 6K8

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REGIONAL BOUNDARIES ——

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